

Offering Spinal Decompression Therapy? Expect ACN to Try to Terminate Your Contract!

By James Edwards, DC

After writing my first article on spinal decompression therapy (Feb. 12, 2007 issue of *Dynamic Chiropractic*),¹ I must admit that the response from readers was somewhat surprising. In fact, I received more e-mail responses about that article than any other article I have written as a columnist for this publication!

As consultants for doctors who provide traction/decompression services and as postgraduate instructors on traction/decompression coding and marketing compliance, nothing happens in the spinal decompression arena without me and my wife and practice partner, Dr. Cynthia Vaughn, hearing about it within hours. And since the publication of my first article, a great deal has occurred, especially related to insurance company coding positions and licensing board actions against doctors.

For that reason, I was writing this issue's article about those two subjects. But on the very day of the submission deadline for this issue, Dr. Vaughn and I received certified letters from the American Chiropractic Network (ACN), notifying us that ACN was terminating our provider contracts based upon the insurer's contention that spinal decompression therapy is an unproven modality for therapeutic purposes. Thus, our discussion of those other two subjects will have to wait, as I will use this article to alert the profession about ACN's latest antics.

Here is a thumbnail sketch of what has occurred. As consultants on traction/decompression coding and marketing compliance, we undertook to represent a client in his effort to stop ACN from terminating his provider contract on the primary basis that he was offering traction/decompression services. Once we agreed to serve as his expert witnesses and that became known to ACN, we also became targets of its termination jihad.

For the life of us, we do not understand why ACN would attempt to cancel a provider's contract on the basis of providing traction/decompression services. However, we suspect ACN is using this avenue to remove doctors who currently advocate the benefits of spinal decompression therapy, and especially those doctors who serve the American Chiropractic Association - such as Dr. Vaughn and I - and who are very active in the ACA's pending lawsuit against ACN.

English philosopher Edmund Burke once said, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Dr. Vaughn and I will not be guilty of "doing nothing" as ACN attempts to bully members of the chiropractic profession and chiropractic patients into accepting only those treatment options deemed acceptable to the shortsighted and misguided administrators at ACN.

Should you face similar inquiries or threatened sanctions through your use of traction/decompression services, or should you have questions or want additional information on issues related to spinal decompression coding, office procedures or marketing compliance, please feel free to contact me.

Reference

1. Edwards J. "Spinal Decompression 101." *Dynamic Chiropractic*, Feb. 12, 2007; 25(4). Available at: www.chiroweb.com/archives/25/04/03.html.

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